UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/81
9 February 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Letter dated 7 February 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith a statement dated 7 February 1995 by the Association of Croats from north-western Bosnia.

I would kindly request your assistance in distributing this letter and its annex as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "Human rights questions: Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives".

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Of the 80,000 Croats who lived in north-western Bosnia before the war, over 50,000 have been expelled by Serbian forces during the last three years. This includes 20,000 out of the 30,000 Croats who lived in the city of Banja Luka.

During this time the entire non-Serbian population has been either killed, expelled or mistreated. They have been subjected to terror and forced labour, often being taken to the confrontation lines to serve as human shields and forced to fight against their own people, in violation of article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

During the last two months, the situation has become even worse as exemplified by the events of 5 December 1994 and of Christmas Day, when Croat and Muslim civilians (approximately 300 persons) were seized and taken to serve in the Serbian forces. This was repeated on Sunday, 29 January 1995, when, after attending Mass, some 20 Croat male civilians were taken from the town of Surkovac near Prijedor. The whereabouts of these men is still not known. There have also been numerous incidents of severe physical and psychological abuse of innocent civilians. There has been an even greater number of acts of looting, robbery and illegal confiscation of private property over the course of the last 10 days.

We cite only some cases of sadistic treatment of elderly individuals that occurred in the last few days: I. A. K., from the village of Abrici, M. and R. D., from the village of Kozara, R. R., from Ivanjska, and M. S., from Dragocaj, were subjected to severe physical abuse and their property was pillaged and destroyed. As a result, they are experiencing severe psychological trauma and are in need of medical treatment.

Serbian forces continue to enter Croatian-inhabited villages and engage in acts of physical and psychological abuse, pillage and robbery, while threatening the inhabitants in order to force them to leave their homes in the shortest possible time. The inhabitants are often forced to leave their very homes without being allowed to take any belongings with them. The Serbian forces coerce them into signing papers that state that they have left "voluntarily" and charge them 200 to 500 German marks for the "right" to leave.

The mobilization of Croats between the ages of 18 and 65 has resumed. Among the mobilized are individuals who returned only recently from the battlefields in Glamoc and Bosansko Grahovo where they had been used as human shields by the Serbian forces. Because of this terror, the people are frightened and are worried for their lives. As a result, they have begun to panic and leave in large numbers. Although the Serbian authorities are aware of this situation and receive daily appeals from Bishop Franjo Komarica of Banja Luka, they have not undertaken any measures to protect the innocent non-Serbian civilians who have been left to the mercy of armed Serbian bands.

Association of Croats
from north-western Bosnia